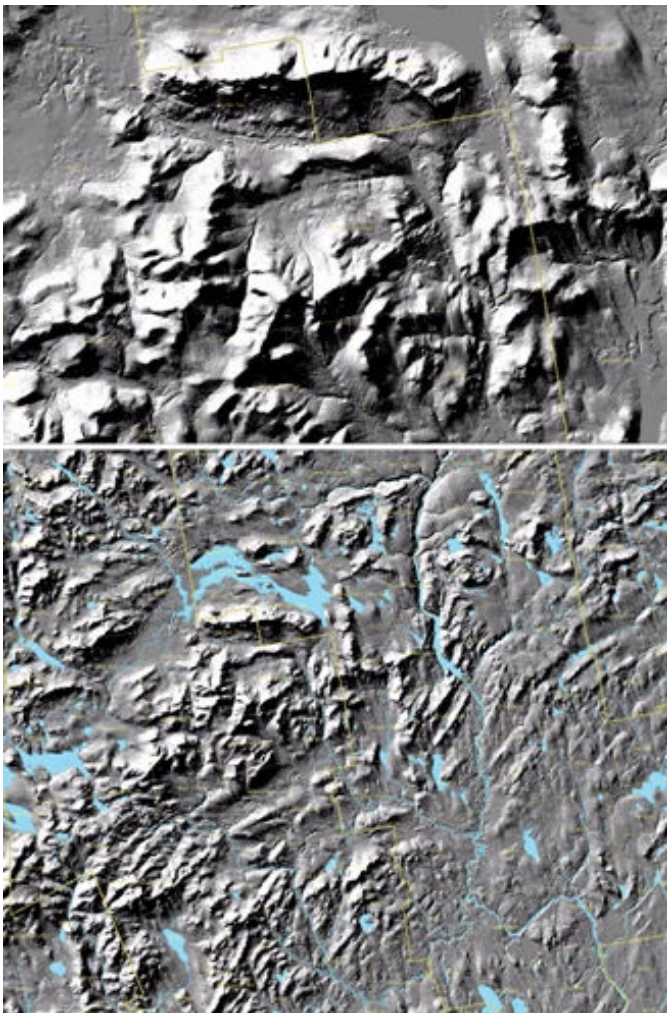


Elevation Matters

The Maine GeoLibrary recommends a \$1.5 million bond initiative to improve land elevation maps for Maine. The bond funds will seed a 2010 project and attract federal dollars.

Maine needs better land elevation maps to support many important state, local and federal programs. Currently, the state relies on USGS topographic maps generated on average over thirty years ago. The topographic maps depict land elevation with 10 foot and 20 foot elevation contours¹. Most state and local applications including site development, flood plain mapping and transportation planning require 2 foot and 4 foot land contours.



Land surface shown in 3-D from accurate land elevation data

Accurate land elevation maps are needed for a variety of purposes from permitting to site design to providing municipal services to predicting the potential impact of global climate change on Maine

communities. Because accurate data is not readily available, the costs are borne by developers, homeowners and property taxpayers, and projects are significantly delayed while the data is collected and processed. Having accurate high resolution topographical data on the shelf and ready to go would stimulate economic development by reducing the costs of permitting and site development as well as significantly reducing the time to complete projects. With better elevation data in the public domain, small Maine towns and the public are better prepared to assess the impact of proposed development

The recently completed Maine GeoLibrary Strategic Plan, *developed with the input of stakeholders across the state*, identifies better topographical data as a statewide priority. The following is a partial list of the applications that will be improved with better topographic data:

The economy of scale provides a very compelling case for producing the data on a statewide basis rather than town-by-town or property-by-property. The estimated cost for acquiring and processing the data for the state to meet the requirements of all stakeholders is approximately \$9,000,000 or about \$270/square mile. A community in southern Maine acquired similar data at nearly \$2,000/square mile.

- Economic development
- Natural resource management
- Environmental protection
- Storm water management
- Code enforcement
- Public safety
- Agriculture
- State permitting
- Flood plain mapping
- Transportation planning

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¹ Elevation contours on a map are lines of equal land elevation